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ABSTRACT

The research methodology of this study included both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Samples consisted of school counselors from 66 Victorian, 33 ACT, and 71 NSW schools in Australia. Findings show that building genuine partnerships between school and external communities requires lots of effort, commitment, and time. Effectiveness of a partnership depends on building mutual understanding, trust, and confidence between the parties. It takes time, due to suspicion and feelings of insecurity, but the experience gained enables them to build genuine partnerships to do their best for the children. Schools being people-oriented social organizations, a high level of commitment and dedication of those involved could lead to significant differences in performance. In achieving the cultural change, the administrators have to work hard in developing the trust and confidence among different categories of stakeholders leading to empowerment toward the realization of the set goals. Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies suggest that when compared with what they experienced under centralized bureaucratic models, school-based management has created more autonomous, flexible, better quality, effective schools accountable not only to the system managers, but also to school communities. (Author)

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D. Gamage

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

SCHOOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT LEADS TO SHARED RESPONSIBILITYAND QUALITY IN EDUCATION

A Paper presented at 46th Conference of the CIES at New Orleans in USA in March 2003

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Abstract: The research methodology included both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Samples comprised of school councilors from 66 Victorian, 33 ACT and 71 NSW schools in Australia. Findings show that building genuine partnerships between school and external communities require lots of efforts, commitment and time. Effectiveness of a partnership depends on building mutual understanding, trust and confidence between the parties. It takes time, due to suspicion and feelings of insecurity, but the experience gained enables them to build genuine partnerships to do their best for the children.

Schools being people oriented social organizations, a high level of commitment and dedication of those involved could lead to significant differences in performance. In achieving the cultural change, the administrators have to work hard in developing the trust and confidence between different categories of stakeholders leading to empowerment towards the realization of the set goals. Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies suggest that when compared to what they experienced under centralized, bureaucratic models, the SBM has created more autonomous, flexible, better quality, effective schools, accountable not only to the systemic managers but also to school communities.

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Introduction

The effective schools movement of the 1970s revealed the importance of building partnerships between the parents and teachers. It was revealed that such a partnership would improve the morale of the students and teachers. It was also suggested that participation lead to ownership of the policies leading to a higher degree of commitment in implementing policies formulated with the involvement of the parties. In this context what matters most is what the community together shares, what the community together believes in, and what the community together wishes to accomplish for their children. This shared vision or community of mind becomes the primary source of authority for what a school community does.

A school community together with the principal and the teachers could be the followers of a dream who are committed to make it real. Accordingly, leadership is nothing more than a means to make things happen. Not only the formal leadership of the

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principal but also other members of the school community has an obligation to embody community values. Thus, in terms of school-based management, the principal, teachers, students, parents and the community representatives together must share the obligation to lead. In a partnership between the school and the community, leadership need not be defined as the exercise of power over the others as was the case in traditional models of school governance. What is needed is the exercise of wit and will to work together to achieve the goals set in accomplishing the shared vision of the partnership. This paper, based on several research projects conducted in New South Wales, Victorian and the ACT school systems in Australia and Leicester in England proposes to examine how SBM could lead to improvement, effectiveness and quality in education.

How to Democratize School Management

In the contemporary world, unlike in the past, most educational reforms are politically motivated. Since the release of the American Report on *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, almost all these reforms concentrated in restructuring the school systems, often involving downsizing, economic rationalism and devolution. In the process of restructuring, action was taken to flatten the bureaucratic structures within the educational systems as well as the schools. With the devolution (transfer) of authority to individual schools, the bureaucratic controls imposed by educational systems were substantially reduced. A governing body or a community forum known as the school council or board was instituted at the apex of the school's hierarchy. This reduces the position of the principal to that of a chief executive officer (CEO) from that of sole authority figure of the school. The principal becomes one amongst a number of representatives of relevant stakeholders sharing the power and authority to make

decisions on important issues affecting the school. All the stakeholders are bound by the common desire to do their best for the kids.

Within the schools, even though the formal structures such as the positions of principal, deputy and assistant/vice principals, head teachers, year coordinators etc. remain in place, in practice, the super-ordinate-subordinate relations are not strictly adhered. Instead more collegial forms of governance and administration are encouraged. Unlike in the case of the traditional bureaucratic model, teachers and students need not be at the mercy of the principal. When key policy issues or controversial matters arise, teachers and students could air their grievances at the governing body. While top down communication is pushed to the background, more emphasis is placed on horizontal and bottom-up communication. On the other hand, when authority is devolved through an Act of Parliament or a State Assembly, even the Minister for Education finds it difficult to interfere with the authority already transferred. Local politicians also find it difficult to interfere with school policies, as it is much more difficult to influence the thinking of a group of people rather than that of a bureaucratic official.

In responding to a question whether there were any problems in having a council composed of different sections of the community, a Victorian primary school principal stated:

> Well, I don't see a great deal of problems. What I do see is that you have a variety of inputs, in other words, people with different backgrounds are giving input and opinions on the ways in which the council can operate and the directions that the school can go. My idea is to take the best out of those as long as people don't get to the stage where they want to push their barrow and not realize that they are missing somebody else's; that is when you can strike a problem. Nine out of ten people at this school put their opinions quite forcefully and honestly and we tend to take those opinions and we come to a consensus decision about what to do (Cited in Gamage, Sipple and Partridge, 1996: 29).

A Victorian secondary school principal who appreciated community participation in his school stated:

> This school council has little problem in formulating policies. Prior to any policy being formulated, it goes to a sub-committee where extensive discussion is carried out at all levels. Students, teachers, parents and ancillary staff are involved if required. It may take a little bit of extra time to come up with a policy; however, we believe it is worth (Cited in Gamage, 1998b: 316)

Building Trust and Confidence

In the past, the principal was vested with the total authority to manage a school. The teachers were free to teach the students as they thought fit, of course, subject to the systemic directions issued through the principal. School authorities encouraged the parents to leave their kids at the gate rather than come in and watch what was happening inside the school. Most meetings or forums between the school and the parents were employed by the school authorities to provide information. The parents were considered as laymen and women who would not be able to contribute to the core business of the school. Because of this gap between the internal and external communities of the school, the concept of SBM with community participation was resisted by most teacher organisations around the world. In fact, the SBM model developed in Los Angeles in the United States in 1989 was the product of a bitter contract dispute between the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The UTLA President has referred to this outcome as a peace treaty that evolved out of a war (Hansen, 1990). However, this did not occur in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) where the concept was born in 1967, as the teachers were in partnership with other key stakeholders. Teachers and school administrators actively supported the move to seek an alternative model to the bureaucratic model.

What is important is to build a trust and confidence between the internal and external communities of the school. Because of the diversity of personalities, interests, attitudes and expectations of each individual and stakeholder category, this is a very complex and difficult task. Traditionally, it was believed that it was the privilege of the teacher to teach and it was the duty of the student to learn. It was the responsibility of the principal to manage the school while the parents were expected to support the school. No party was expected to interfere with the other's sphere of control or influence. Even when parent teacher associations (PTAs) and parents and citizens' associations (P&CAs) were established they were expected to support the decisions made by the school authorities. In such a context, when a partnership is formed with responsibility of working together towards the realisation of a shared vision, building positive relations and learning to trust and place confidence in each other is of primary importance.

In achieving this goal, effective communication is of paramount importance. Everyone must be given a fair chance to express his or her views on a given issue and it is the idea or the opinion, which should be considered but not the person who came up with the idea or expressed the opinion. As wider participation is desirable, a committee structure of the governing body should be designed. This would enable those who are not on the governing body but interested in participation to make contributions to school improvement for the realisation of the shared vision. A committee structure with a consultative process enables stakeholders to develop mutual understanding and work together for the common good. Even though changing the school culture takes time, the new relationships and working arrangements are likely to affect the existing values, beliefs and norms giving rise to a new school culture. When a true partnership is build,

the school authorities will be able to part with the old concept of them vs us and include both internal and external communities in the 'we' category.

An ACT primary school principal commenting on the effectiveness of community participation stated:

> This school is fantastic. ...I have parents working in classrooms, parents who take on parent helper program. ...The P&CA regularly have 20 people come to an executive meeting. They take a very keen interest; have a very intensive newsletter. Parental participation is very good. It has lot to do with the attitude that I have towards people. I see education as a two way process. ...I tell my parents early in the year, this is your responsibility and our responsibility; it is not just ours. In this school, you just don't drop kids at the gate and expect us to do the job. That is the way they believe it should be too (Cited in Gamage, 1998: 55)

A community representative of a high school board, emphasising the strength of the partnership and the trust and confidence build on mutual understanding of the parties involved stated:

> At most board meetings, it is a case of getting agreement around the table from the different areas. It is not a case of, for example, the principal and the teachers deciding en-bloc that they want to do something, ignoring the views of the parents and whatever else. In fact, I can hardly remember, at all, ever coming to a vote on anything. It is by general agreement around the table (Cited in Gamage, 1995: 283-284)

Self-Evaluation Leads to a Shared Vision and a Better School

In order to place the school on a path of school improvement, it is better to start with an analysis of the current status of the organisation. For the purpose of achieving better planning, it would be better to undertake a complete study of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to its existence or development. This study can be undertaken by a working party on the basis of research and wide consultation with all categories of stakeholders. Once the study is completed, it should be discussed widely within the school community followed by brainstorming sessions to

generate ideas in developing a shared vision for the school. In all these processes, it is important for the leader to be actively involved. When it comes to the development of a vision, the leader should be able to guide the group by asking the right questions and projections supported by data in a convincing manner. The vision could be a future state of the school which could be accomplished in 3-5 years, by building on the strengths to overcome the weaknesses, making use of the opportunities available and planning strategies to avoid or face the possible threats.

When a vision is developed, it should be articulated in such a way enabling everyone involved to own the vision. It needs to be a dream, which everyone can visualise how the school would be, when the vision is realised. Vision needs to be a short memorable clear statement with room for interpretations. It needs to be in sight when setting either personal or organisational goals. At the next stage, it is better to establish sub-committees and working parties to establish the goals that are needed to achieve in accomplishing the vision.

In 2000, the Northamptonshire in England adapted a survey instrument for self-evaluation of the schools based on the instrument developed by Mortimore and Stoll in 1995. The following eleven complementary factors have been focused in the survey:

- Leadership Style;
- Communication of values and goals;
- Teamwork
- The learning environment
- Teaching and learning
- Expectations
- Positive and constructive feedback and reinforcement;
- Monitoring and enquiry;

- Pupil rights and responsibilities;
- Learning organisation; and
- Partnership and support (Burton, 2000: 9).

The initial responses from participating schools have confirmed that it helps to provide a wider view of the school since it draws on the perceptions of all its constituents. It also helps the governors to have a clear understanding of the community's expectations. In practical terms, it has enabled head-teachers to either confirm or re-assess the key points and priorities in their school improvement plans. The stakeholder participation in formulating school policies has increased the confidence of teachers and leaders as they are assured of community support for the direction that the school is heading. The stakeholder views were considered as a particular strength of the school (Burton, 2000).

Developing a Strategic Plan

In the contemporary world, similar to many other fields, education is undergoing unprecedented change due to the advancement of technology, globalisation and changing expectations of the society. Educational leaders find it extremely difficult to face the challenges and predict the future for their organisations. Strategic planning is a means by which they can establish and maintain a sense of direction. It is a continuous process by which an organisation is kept on course, through making adjustments when both the internal and external contexts change. Planning cannot be considered as having completed when the written document is finalised, it is only a record of the process at a given point of time; the difficult part is the implementation.

In strategic planning the emphasis is on evolutionary or rolling plans, enabling adjustments to be made to suit the changing circumstances. Strategic planning, which is

a way of looking more systematically into the future, originated in the business world in the 1970s and has now become a standard part of management thinking in most organisations. The main purpose is to prepare the best fit between the organisation and the environment leading to the development of the best strategy for the organisation to move forward. Today, strategic planning is a technique, which assists leaders and managers in dealing with the increasingly turbulent environments and challenges, which confront organisations. The school development planning stresses the link between planning and school improvement and as strategic planning takes an overall view of the long-term development, many educational institutions have embraced the concept of strategic planning.

Once the shared vision and the goals are agreed to at the organisational level, it is important to organise the school development or strategic plan. In drafting a strategic plan, it is important to establish a strategic planning group for involving all stakeholders. This group or the working party needs to be entrusted with the overall responsibility. Within the purview of this team, it is better to establish smaller teams with the responsibility of organising the strategic plans for particular areas or faculties to be incorporated into the overall plan. When the final draft is ready, it is better to provide an opportunity for all those affected and interested to express their views and accommodate desirable and feasible amendments before the governing body approves the plan.

Once the plan is approved, it becomes the responsibility of the CEO to organise the implementation by those who have been made responsible for various faculties and/or sections in keeping with the target dates. The same strategic planning group (committee) can be entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the progress of implementation

with monthly progress reports by the principal to the governing body. If and when problems arise, action needs to be taken to address them without delay. On the other hand, at the end of each year, another year needs to be added with necessary amendments to the goals, making it a rolling plan in moving the school towards excellence.

In responding to a question whether her school had a strategic plan, a principal of a Community College in Leicester, England, responded:

> Yes, we have a strategic plan, which was prepared by consulting senior management, the teachers and to some extent, the students. We have very broad aims; we try to focus our plan on outcomes for students. And each of our aims and goals, we have targets to achieve, which we monitor. The governors are very much involved in each term, when I report to them in writing on the monitoring of the plan. So they have a very important role in monitoring – at the level of an overview (Cited in Gamage, 2000: 10)

A primary school teacher governor in Leicester described the procedure followed in the preparation of the strategic plan in her school, as follows:

> It has evolved over the past few years. Everyone is involved in it. The members of staff put together their three-year rolling program and governors have their part to play. We meet in the summer and discuss what we have achieved and what we hope to achieve. We have interviews with the head-teacher as well. I can say that we have ownership of this document (Cited in Gamage, 2000: 10)

In terms of the scheme operative for local management of schools (LMS), in England and Wales, if the governing body affects savings in a given year, the surplus remains with the school while a deficit needs to be carried forward to the next year.

Transformational Leadership

Based on the strategic plan, the school leader should undertake a review of the administrative structure within the organisation with a view to removing any bottlenecks, which obstructs the smooth functioning. In view of the participatory process of decision-making, the committees can be established as subcommittees of the governing body or as

school committees with relevant authority and responsibility. This would enable wider participation, tapping the full potential of all-organizational members as well as empowerment and transformation of a group of people as school leaders. These measures are likely to give rise to a healthier organisational climate and culture which is likely to boost staff and student morale leading to more effective teaching and learning environments.

With the implementation of SBM, the representative nature of the governing body (GB) gives rise to the emergence of leaders within all stakeholder categories. The representatives of teachers, students, parents and local community get automatically empowered because of the authority vested in the GB as well as specific responsibilities that are likely to be assigned to individual members. Many opportunities also arise for the other members of staff and community to be involved in different sub-committees and working parties that are usually established for policy development. This creates a transformational leadership not only within the school but also outside the school. In the past, the school community got the messages only from the school leader, but with SBM same messages are given by a number of leaders in many different voices. Empowerment and participation enable them to claim ownership, which in turn increases their commitments to the process of implementation with higher levels of motivation and morale. Thus, it could be made a genuine partnership where everyone plays his or her role to move the school towards excellence.

An Australian primary school principal in New South Wales appreciating the significance of the involvement of the local community and the leadership and expertise provided stated:

> There have been several school council recommendations that I haven't personally agreed with. ...But I have recorded my disapproval and gone ahead and did what the school council decided. One in particular, was we have always provided students everything free. ...School council felt that the school couldn't afford to do that any longer and decided that the students should pay for their textbooks. I philosophically disagreed but of course the school council decided to do it and we did it. And as it turned out, I think the school would have been broke if we hadn't done so. It was definitely the right decision. If they are involved in the decision and maintain an ownership of that decision, it is much easier to implement. ...I think we are lucky here, because the community we feed from is mostly professional people who have a great deal of expertise, so by generating an ideal, it is able to follow and develop a lot on its own (A primary school principal, 1997).

Importance of Effective Communication and Decision-Making

Communication is the glue that holds the different parts of an organisation together. Communication assists the organizational members to achieve both organisational and individual goals. Implement and respond to organisational change, coordinate organisational activities, and engage in virtually all organisationally relevant behaviours. On the other hand, breakdowns in communication lead to disastrous repercussions. It would be extremely difficult to find an aspect of a leader/manager's job that does not involve communication. Serious problems arise when directives are misunderstood, when casual kidding in a work group leads to anger, or when informal remarks by a top-level manager are distorted. Each of these situations is a breakdown in the process of communication. Thus, communication is unavoidable within any organisation; it is only effective communication that is avoidable. Every manager must be an effective communicator. In fact, everything that a leader/manager does, communicates something in someway to somebody or groups.

Communication is so important in educational contexts such as in schools; it is a fundamental and an integrative process in educational administration and management.

Communication expects to share messages, ideas or attitudes that produce understanding between the sender and receiver. Communication is the process that supplies necessary technical and coordination related and motivational information to all corners of an organisation. The design of the communication structure should be contingent upon the nature of the task to be planned. Communication is a complex process because several sources may send competing and conflicting messages simultaneously. Information may also be subject to distortion as it is transmitted through intermediate levels of supervision. It is also subject to distortion when the receiver interprets the message. Although perfection is virtually impossible, several techniques are available to measure and improve the communication process at both the individual and operational levels. A teacher representative of a Victorian high school commenting on effective communication processes and provision of information stated:

> Information is supplied to members in written form before any discussion is started. Each council meeting is supplied with full details, whether it is with newspaper cuttings, documents from other schools, views of individuals, parents, students and teachers. I think school council has an excellent opportunity to read through these, well before hand and talk to other people before the actual decision is made. If anybody feels that there wasn't sufficient information, then the decision-making process is put off until further information is available so there is no attempt to ram decisions through the council (Cited in Gamage, Sipple and Partridge, 1996: 30).

Decision-making is one of the most primary responsibilities of an administrator. It is widely recognised as at the heart of an organisation or central to the administration. Policy-making itself is a product of decision-making; it establishes the values and guidelines for operational decisions. What we describe as organising is the distribution of authority to officers and groups to make decisions within the organisational settings. Even if we think of one's own family, which is the smallest organisation, very often,

husband and wife either formally or informally agree or empower each other to make decisions relating to different aspects of family affairs. Communication is essential to the transmission of information to decision-makers. Evaluation and even auditing is the process of making judgements relating to the quality of decisions. In fact, the quality of administration is largely a function of the organisation's capability to make qualitative and effective decisions supported by an effective network of communication. The leadership of effective organisations often prefers to create the structures and lay down the procedures for others to be involved in decision-making rather than making a large number of decisions by him or her.

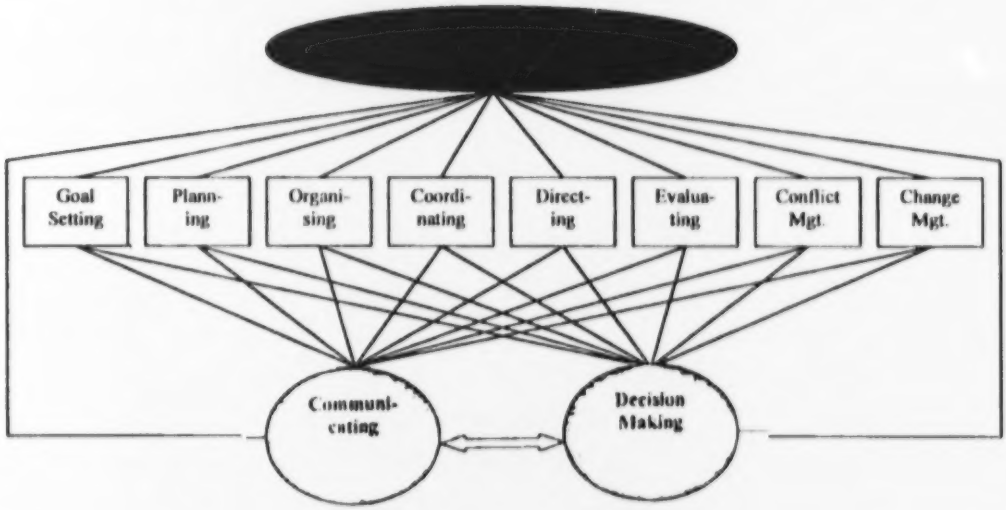
In most complex organisations, the governing bodies work through a committee structure to make the process more efficient and effective. Very often, time-consuming broader issues are referred to the relevant committees for detailed study, supported by appropriate research and consultation before arriving at a final decision by the governing body. Commenting on the effectiveness of the committee structure, which assists the decision-making process, and wider participation, a Victorian secondary school council president stated:

> Our policy formulation begins with the sub-committee structure in the school and many of the issues are thrashed out at that level before it actually goes to council. Then a recommendation is put to the council with all the necessary support material and information that need to develop the policy. It seems to work most effectively. There isn't on our council a power group at all. There is opportunity for all members to contribute to that development. We do look to the principal to give some general direction. We respect and value his opinion he has generally arrived at after consulting various groups within the school, that is staff in particular and others in the school. So it is really is, I believe a very good and co-operative way of developing policy (Cited in Gamage, 1998a: 53).

In making the school-based management effective, one has to understand the inter-relatedness and the inter-dependent nature of communication and decision-making

in organisational settings. It is like the warp and woof of the weaving process of a fabric: identifiable and individual strands woven together, reinforcing and interacting with each other while functioning as a whole. The figure 1 below illustrates this warp and woof relationship. Communication and decision-making is the essence of leading participatory models of management, since it is the management of communication and decision-making that makes a difference to effectiveness.

Figure 1. The Interweaving of the Leader's/Manager's Tasks



Developing Business and Industry Partnerships

Nowadays there are many occasions where employers complain that school graduates do not stand up to the competency standards required by their business or industrial organisations. The dramatic advances made by technology have resulted in rapidly changing working environments, which necessitate discarding traditional concepts of school curriculum as well as teaching and learning. SBM with community participation provides a golden opportunity to get employers to participate in decision-

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making at the school level, as key stakeholders employing the secondary school graduates. This arrangement enables the schools to appoint local business and industry leaders as community representatives to their governing bodies, empowering them to contribute their input in shaping the school curriculum in such a way as to meet the contemporary needs and competency standards of the modern workplaces.

A Victorian primary school principal, who appreciated the contributions made by the business community at his school commented:

> We have a couple of businessmen running their own businesses. They are extremely busy and their input to council is high, but actually to get them to scheduled meetings or have inspections with them is the only difficulty we've got. I would say that everything else is definitely a plus. The difficulty of time is a very small price to pay for the input from these people (Cited in Gamage, 1998b: 318)

Thus, by taking part in SBM, the business community has a great opportunity not only to contribute their ideas and opinions but also to provide badly needed funding for equipment and facilities for programs of study. On the other hand, this sort of partnership provides opportunities for apprenticeships benefiting the organisation in particular and productive investment in human resources development in general. Students would also be motivated better when they see the linkage between school learning and life skills for gainful employment later in life when they are out of school.

Additional Resources at a Time of Declining Public Funding

In the contemporary world, most governmental reforms involve economic rationalisation and downsizing of the bureaucracies. When the need for expansion of the services increases with increasing population, the amount of resources allocated becomes less and less in real terms. Education being one of the biggest budgetary items of any

country fixing priorities between competing demands becomes pretty difficult. Considering the large numbers that are being employed by school systems in particular, attempts to improve teacher salaries lead to significant increases in government expenditure. But, if a country needs to improve its economy especially in an era of a knowledge society, it needs to have a well-educated competent workforce. In this context, if a country is to meet this need, it must consider providing quality education to its potential workforce as an investment and not as another item of expenditure. SBM enables the school systems to downsize their huge bureaucracies to cut down overhead costs and transfer the savings to meet the school needs. Apart from voluntary labour provided by the parents and the community, funds raised by the school community, supplements the limited resources to upgrade the facilities and equipment.

A primary school teacher commenting on how the limited resources were supplemented by the community, stated:

> The school council is very interested in raising funds for the school. One particular program that they have had was for raising money for our computer education. Last year $14,000 was spent on buying computers and all this money, was raised by the council. When the school was run down, the school council has done things like painting the library, painting the canteen, all in their own time. They take an active interest in maintaining the physical surroundings of the school. The working bees that we have at this school are very well run. ... They are always ready to provide funds or them as helpers for any particular project that we have going at any time (Cited in Gamage, 1998b: 319).

Improving the Quality of Education

Research on effective schools have shown that parental involvement in school level decision-making and other school activities motivates both the students and teachers. A partnership between the school and the community provides opportunities for the community to acquire a better understanding of what goes on in the school and

what teachers are doing for the kids. Such an understanding enables them to make a more effective commitment towards school activities with a view to improving student learning. At a time of limited resources and budget cuts, the voluntary work by the parents in assisting the teachers in their classrooms and contributions to working bees enables the school to maintain the buildings and grounds neat and tidy. This enables the school to create a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment conducive to improving student learning. The development of policies such as the students' code of discipline with the participation of the community enables effective implementation of such policies, as students are aware that the parents support such measures. In turn this creates an orderly and positive school climate improving the quality of student learning.

A teacher representative of a Victorian primary school responding to a question whether there has been any positive impact of community participation on the quality of learning, stated:

> This is my third year in the school, and when we came, the physical condition of the school was appalling. It hadn't an up-date for many years and the last up-date was in the 1970s... And together with the new principal, when Chris arrived, parents seemed to be waiting there for an impetus to get moving and together we have virtually reconstructed the school. It's being repainted, it's being carpeted and ground work done to such an extent that we actually won an award last year. ...That physical improvement in changing the school obviously has had a positive impact on the environment that the children work in, and therefore their curriculum and input has gone on in leaps and bounds. In the case of parent participation program in classrooms, ...they organise and run all activities, ...not just, at fund-raising level but at the core of curriculum and ground development. ...We couldn't have done without them (Cited in Gamage, 1998b: 320).

A high school principal commenting on school council's impact on the teaching and learning environment, stated:

> Policy development here is slow and laborious but thorough and I think the council is having an impact on the curriculum development, assessment, reporting and also teaching and learning. Its known by teachers and parents to have a say in

> that has helped. I think that our resources allocation has meant that we are very keen to support teachers through providing learning areas with sufficient money, as much as we can afford and also by the allocation of equipment... The Council had a particularly strong role in the development of performing arts, by undertaking the development of a $500,000 Performing Arts Centre, including an auditorium, learning and teaching spaces, even when the Government grant was limited to $95,000 (Cited in Gamage, 1993).

A primary school teacher from the ACT, commenting on how the active support of the school council lead to teacher motivation resulting in better quality teaching and learning, stated:

> No decision is made in the school without the school council. They play a very positive role in maintenance around the school, both inside and outside. Fund raising goes towards computers and anything that the teachers might need. The school council in conjunction with the Parents' Club work together very well. The Council is so supportive makes teaching a lot easier (Cited in Gamage, 1996)

On the other hand, the concept of a learning community can be incorporated within the whole school community. Small teams of teachers, administrators, parents and when relevant students can band together to study different aspects of the school organisation in moving the organisation towards excellence. The team approach will enable the consolidation of the mutual understanding towards the creation of a genuine partnership and take pride in helping the school.

Ensuring Accountability - Progress Reports and Annual Reports

In the past, the school leaders were required to be responsible and accountable only to the system authorities. But, in terms of the legal and practical procedures introduced in terms of SBM, now, school leaders have been required to be responsible and accountable to the system authorities and more importantly to the school community through the governing body. Several procedures have been adopted to render this accountability. School governors or councilors have the right not only to raise questions

at the meetings on any issue deemed appropriate but also to call for written reports. Apart from that at regular meetings of the GB, the principal in his or her capacity as the CEO is expected to report the progress made on the implementation of the decisions already made and policies adopted. The GB is also empowered to institute committees of inquiry on any issue, if it is deemed expedient to do so. At the end of the school year, the principal is required to submit an annual report including an audited statement of accounts to the school community and the systemic authorities through the governing body.

Conclusion

Thus, it is clear that the concept of SBM has incorporated many of the recommendations made by the researchers on effective schools and have produced an alternative model of school management to the bureaucratic model. It has modified the bureaucratic structure to a significant degree by instituting a representative governing body at the apex of the school's hierarchical structure. The super-ordinate and subordinate relations, impersonality, bureaucratic rules and top-down communication have been replaced (to a considerable degree) with more collegial forms of management and horizontal communication. Because of the partnership between the community and the school, more resources in the form of voluntary services and financial resources have been made available.

The representative nature of the governing body and the significant numbers of sub-committees and working parties that are being established have enabled wider participation in the decision-making processes. These new structures have empowered many of those who want to participate and prove their potential to make contributions to

achieve the organisational goals as well as their own. The parental and community contributions, availability of additional resources and many opportunities to be involved and make contributions have improved the motivation and morale of the staff and students. In turn, these factors contribute to create a safe, healthy and positive teaching and learning environment leading to better quality, efficient and effective schools. In the final analysis, SBM has made schools more autonomous, flexible, participatory, accountable and effective in meeting the societal needs.

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